

February 10, 1958

Dr. Harry Eagle  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda 14, Maryland

Dear Harry:

Thank you very much for the good letter which you sent to Dr. Bronk. Even if he wanted to, which I have no reason to believe, he could hardly ignore such a straightforward representation. Actually I am rather hopeful that the meeting this weekend of the governing board of the academy may produce some results. The most likely eventuality might be that you would be asked to nominate the committee indicated. If so I would like to urge you to keep the group from becoming too immoderately large, perhaps no more than four or five or six members on the committee itself.

Of course it still seems likely that the Russians are in a key position in this game. What I am hoping is that a sufficiently authoritative statement of the objective of an uncontaminated moon can issue in this country to make it possible for the academy or another agency to communicate with the Russians on a sensible basis. I have been rather hesitant to do this on an informal personal basis mainly for fear that it might become a propaganda issue if there should be some delay, or good reason against, American acceptance of the objective. For much the same reason I would rather discourage any lurid newspaper publicity on the matter until the proposition has had a fair hearing in scientific circles. There is of course some danger that the newspapers will pick it up and I hardly know that there is very much we could do about it. Hiden Cox of the AIBS called me the other day and warned me of the possibility since the subject had been brought up in the course of his appeals to Killian with regard to the biological state in a civilian administration of the space programs. It is obvious that we may need a Washington representative to help keep this project from getting sour. If you do not find it possible to commit yourself to a sufficient degree for such a purpose, I suggest that you do keep in touch with Dean Cowie.

However I do not see how such a self-evident proposition can be stalled if it is handled with just a little discretion. Of course what we don't know includes the possible military plans and objectives for missiles to the moon that might legitimately or otherwise override our microbiological intentions.

With all best regards,

As ever,

JL/cw